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Non-Fiction (2,229 Words)

The Har-Magedon Thai Stick

Note: The following is a true story. Only the names have been changed, to protect the guilty (with cheers to Bon Scott).

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I experienced something one far out winter night that sort of forever changed the switching system of personal railroads. We've all had one of those deals, where we found ourselves looking at super new dimensions and discoveries. Or at least something that no longer looked like a bowling ball.

The night I mention took me into the world of Har-Magedon. You know about that, right? The end of time? El Finito? The complete devastation of humanity and pizza?

No escape. No defense. Death. It was something.

Behold, the opening:

Around 10:40 PM, deep in North Las Vegas Nevada, US (aka Northtown). Imagine a lower middle-class neighborhood, way across a blank desert area and on the other side of a stupidly big drainage ditch. Had to move bipedal to enter said neighborhood from the extreme northern side, day or night. And the final destination thereafter was maybe seven single-floor houses to the left.

I was half-honkey, half-Armenian. Well, double-honkey, technically. My age was 17...

...and my primary associate at the time was an amazing 19 year-old dude named Parker. Black, about 6'2" (1.8m), dug major metal concert shirts like The Scorpions and Judas Priest. Parker was physically superb, both intimidating and yet positively well-dialed for the energy around him...wherever he managed to find it.

Parker also had moves precisely like Michael Jackson of the time, plus a cherished habit of cranking "You Dropped a Bomb On Me" from The Gap Band...on countless occasions.

After an early-evening hike across Northtown and its desert "gaps" Parker and I were finally both sitting in our destination house, the Bello Drive residence of a brilliant 17 year-old guy we jokingly called "The Hermit". He wasn't really a hermit, but he liked to hang in his almost 100% dark bedroom and smoke dope all day and night. Back when even a puff of weed could put you in prison.

Remember that? Seems dumb-silly today.

Anyway, the hermit's name was actually Pérez. He was very clear about having pure Euro-Spanish blood, since his mom and dad came from Catalonia. I always thought he was kinda movie dapper, like a swashbuckler with a high-end beard. Skinny too, and he always wore a red bandana around his head, like a hippie bandit thing. Which he really dug when he played Frisbee Golf all the time.

Pérez was also super proud of his six Rossignol skis, which stood on definite display from the ground in his room, of course next to over-sized and well-used bongos.

Hah! And Parker really dug the elf-like Frisbee boots Pérez used to wear. Guess I did, too. Knee-tall, brown light leather, organic laces. Yeah, between those and the headband, Pérez was a regular stoner Renaissance dude.

Pérez saw it was getting late, so he asked if we wanted something new, a thing called “Thai Stick”. Hell is that? Pérez said it was Thailand weed (marijuana) somehow compressed and wrapped around a little twig. The catch being, it was super-duper strong.

Like, legendary.

Hm. I looked at Parker, who I knew would say “No”. He wasn’t a fan of green dope, you see. Always complained it made him feel funny. Hey, it happens. But it musta been something about an item as exotic as Thai Stick somehow arriving in Northtown that really got his interest.

“Okay, man,” says Parker. “Just a little.”

Pérez broke out his stash, some kind of vintage Hot Wheels car case, disguised. He opened the lid...and there kind of sitting by itself (with a copy of Zig-Zag papers) was the Thai Stick. It seemed like something to eat, sort of a satay thing. Hm.

The fact I didn’t know at the time was, Thai Stick was almost certainly gone from the US by 1980. Since it was then late ’82, seems unlikely as hell it was genuine.

However, I was certainly aware by many travels through dope land (marijuana) that whatever it was, it looked Goddamned gourmet. Obviously a fairly thick tar under compressed buds, wrapped with spidery string. Might that tar be *hashish*...?

Sure as hell wasn’t Donkey Kong.

A piece of the weed on the stick had clearly been sampled already, but why complain? Wasn't our stash. Away Pérez went to surgery. In no time we had a weirdly gun metal blue bong, packed and ready to do it.

Off we went. Pérez was first, a real pro. I followed and noticed right away a marijuana taste I'd never experienced. Something highly green and spicy, like weed but not like weed. The bud in the bowl was slightly gummy, like mint jam but way dense.

As I handed the bong to Parker it was evident this was some kinda *Grand Prize Dope*, for sure. Talk about powerful. All the best things about cannabis— the physical, the mental, developmental...each were exaggerated and felt pretty damned capital.

Parker was suspicious, but knew he was wrong. So he got himself a smaller hit from the bong, maybe 1/3 like my own. Seemed kinda hilarious, this tough dude doing a puff like he was gingerly daubing Earl Grey, hot.

After holding his breath a bit, he released and smiled wide. "That's some esoteric shit, dude. Damn!"

Yes, a great moment. For all of us. No idea if we'd ever see the magnificent, possibly phony Thai Stick again...but for now it was doing fine.

We each had a couple more hits, and then it was time to enter the evening's 37°F (2.7°C) and its mega-clear starry skies...with a floating quarter moon. An interesting dark walk across the desert awaited, and the flood ditch, and the hallowed "Pathway of Eld" behind the trailer court. Then a risky near-midnight trip through the heart of Northtown itself, where Parker and I would have to split ways and do our final journeys solo.

Always dangerous, but def exhilarating.

Pérez saw us out through the Bello Drive front door and into a blanketed world. With a big smile on his face. Bastard. Hah!

Yeah, he was grinning because about then, I was catching the big diff between supposed Thai Stick and the regular “street baggie” weed we all knew. Huge forward step, mentally. Everything had an ultra-enhanced presence— like looking at street signs, lights, porches. Wow. Almost a Kubrick/Spielberg movie trailer, or something. Shapes solidly in view, everywhere.

We made our departure from the hood to empty crossings of desert. It was like reading some kind of adventure novel found at a bus stop. With almost zero sound. It was something. Huge lack of anything but modest moonlight, outlines, and not another person anywhere.

After the first part of the trek we later entered the primary Northtown residential area, both of us on alert. Let's face it, Northtown's a high-crime place then and now, regardless of the clock. But even more so after the streetlights came on.

And right now the time was moving to midnight in a non-internet, non-cellular age. Around then I used to love kind of spying on the blue glows coming out of many unlit houses and apartments from those old cathode TVs of the era. And re-runs of Charlie's Angels, no doubt.

As it went, we were both stellar high as hell right then. Like, extremely abnormally high. It was clean and strong, not bad or draining at all. Showboats paddling through paradise...

Parker and I took an off-trail path behind the Boys Club of Southern Nevada, now called Boys and Girls Club. We'd spent many a year of sun at the place, inside and out. But right now it seemed so...desolate. Hm.

As we crossed behind the Club, all that remained to do was a half a block through a completely abandoned spot parallel to a 7' (2.1m) chain link fence. Dark as hell, minus a lighting bleach from the quarter moon above. Not too far was the corner of Carey & Las Vegas Boulevard North, across the street from the power plant and next to a VW garage that sat there for decades.

Well, maybe it was VW.

So here it was just me and Parker, walking stupidly...right into the end of the world.

Yes, the end of the planet. The End of Times.

Har-Magedon.

And here it came:

Parker and I walked slowly, enjoying the new black night and freedom provided by the Thai twig. I looked up, having noticed something high in the atmosphere. It stopped me.

A feathery line crossed the entire sky from north to south. Looked like a large jet contrail. It was technically below the quarter moon but became more and more visible as it neared the moon's aura.

At first I was a bit confused by the clarity of the contrail...which was starting to look rather similar to an actual item of some kind, and not jet exhaust at all.

But wait, there's more:

Within maybe three seconds I saw what the trail really was: a colossal sword, made of white-toned metal. A vicious, aggressive blade, pointed dead south (left). Looked a great deal like a British flank officer's sabre, in basic design.

And yes, at the northern end of the sword (right side) was a hand of some kind, wielding the weapon from the hilt, covered by a rounded sort of cross-guard below.

No doubt or mistake at all: there it was, a deadly, possibly 15-mile long (24km) sword arriving through earth's mesosphere...wielded by Archangel Michael or some other bad-ass.

For a couple seconds I was literally unable to breath. Totally stunned. Adrenaline fired from all nozzles so I yelled to Parker, "Dude!! Look!!"

Parker looked up. He froze like a bomb pop, his eyes turned to saucers. Right then it was clear: he was seeing what *I* saw, the titanic and grim military blade crossing the heavens...and looking very much like it was preparing to knock the fuck outta earth.

And us with it.

Parker's mouth opened in a silent scream. Now, listen: I knew the dude for quite a while before this night. He was a tough, dangerous, intelligent cat you did *not* want to mess with. At all. When conflicts came about he was stoic and cool as ice.

Except for now. Because...

Parker panicked. Not kidding here. He dropped to his knees next to that chain link fence, and covered his eyes. "Nooo!! Nooo!! Please!!"

I stared back at the sword. It was coming. And the closer it got to the quarter moonlight, the more brutal it appeared.

This was it.

Yes, all that baloney shit they told us about Har-Magedon and so on? Real. It was happening right now, above us. It was over. Life on earth was ending.

I yelled to Parker, “We gotta hide man! C’mon!” Parker turned his face away, toward the ground. He refused to get up, kept yelling, “Nooo!! Nooo!!”

Yes, we were toast. I tried to keep an attitude, but no way I was gonna last. Soon I’d be dead, as would all the others in this part of the galaxy.

A matter of seconds...

So I looked up and accepted fate. Acknowledged that so much of the stuff society and friends tried to make us believe about the Heavenly Host was real.

But then...

The contrail started to fade. It did! Less and less cloud, more and more mist. And almost 100% dispersal, as it now passed directly in front of the quarter moon.

Parker was still on his knees, his head down between them, crying. And right then it was like a switch went off between my eyes...and I recognized the entire contrail thing as *horseshit*.

I looked up again to make sure. Yeah, just a Goddamned cloud thing that pretty quickly flopped apart and vanished.

I felt pretty stupid. Like, dumb as hell. So I start laughing, and went over to actually drag Parker up from his knees. “Dude! It’s bullshit! Just a cloud!”

Parker made himself look up, tears streaming down both cheeks. He examined the cloud, and within seconds figured he was conned. At first he was über-pissed at himself, but then could do nothing more than laugh.

And laugh and laugh. Which we *both* did.

We stood in the night and talked a bit about the experience. What we both drew from it was the fact that we genuinely felt we were soon to be killed. Along with the rest of the city.

Regardless of where that impulse really came from, both of us had tasted how a situation like that feels, in reality. Not just something we saw on the news, or whatever.

Or heard on Star Trek.

Anyway, we did a “street-style” handshake. Parker walked off to the dark toward East Judson Avenue and I went across Las Vegas Boulevard North, headed to Hamilton & Nelson.

Home. At age 17.

To this day in 2026 the Har-Magedon experience of '82 remains pretty phenomenal. Parker and I both saw the same ridiculous illusion from the Thai Stick (or whatever it really was) and both had super-powerful, highly realistic reactions. Interesting the results it produced, and how we both realized a thing few Homo sapiens will ever know or confront.

At least in the fantasy realm.

Slept great that night.

And I still see that phenomenal sword-cloud very clearly in memory, under sativa or not.

End.